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REVIEWS AND ABSTRACTS OF LITERATURE

Structure and Growth of the Mind. W. MITCHELL. London: Macmillan & Co. 1907. Pp. xxxvi + 512.

In writing the present volume the author has had in mind the needs of the lecturer on philosophy. Where difficult matters are to be treated of it is desirable to put into the hands of the student some treatise which can be taken as the topic for elucidation and discussion. The author believes, moreover, that psychology is the proper introduction to philosophy, since it transforms common sense, leads into the central problems of metaphysics, and supplies necessary data for logic, esthetics, education, medicine, and neurology. The present volume is thus designed to be a text-book, an "introduction with reference to psychology." Now it may be said at once that its style forbids its use except by the most advanced and patient students. Accustomed to the dreariness and obscurity which commonly prevail in the field of epistemology, one is at first inclined to hold the subject-matter accountable. But this would scarcely explain the undeniable dreariness and obscurity of the preface. Even what the reviewer has gleaned concerning the plan and scope of the book has cost him hard study; and he is by no means certain of his conclusions. Pronouns rarely refer to anything that still lingers in the memory of the reader, so that it is almost invariably necessary to retrace one's steps and grope for the context. Furthermore, there is no contour or difference of emphasis, so that reading the book is like swimming under water with never a chance to come up and look about. And the style is *really* regrettable because the book is worth reading.

The body of the book is taken up with what the author calls "the direct explanation of mind," as distinguished from the indirect or physiological explanation, which receives only a single chapter at the end. Part I. serves as a general introduction, and contains the essentials of the author's general theory of mind. We shall confine our critical remarks to this portion of the book. Materialism and monism agree, the author holds, in affirming that mind and brain do not interact, and in aiming to make the physical explanation complete in its own terms. Neither of these theories, and dualism much less, can object to a similar attempt to explain mind in *its* own terms. But such explanation is possible because mind as such grows and has structure. One hesitates to treat the mind as a thing only because "thing" is commonly supposed to signify inherence of attributes in a transcendent essence. When we understand that a thing is "the system of its attributes" and that it is absurd to look for anything that is not actual or possible object of knowledge, we discover that mind is in fact the primary thing. Physical things turn out to be "abstractions in a way that mind is not." "Nature is reality as it is presented to sense, and, in order to deal with it as an independent system, we abstract from its relation to sense." Not troubled by the absurdity involved in this proposition, the author proposes to improve upon dualism and parallelistic monism by the following generalization: "A mind and its experiences are realities that are presentable to sense as the brain and its actions. In that respect the mind and experience are not parallel with nature, but a part of it. And, on the other hand, the facts of nature, including the brain, whenever they are phenomena, are not parallel with mental phenomena, but part of them." But here is parallelism returning with seven other devils. For what is the relation between the system of things presentable to sense and the system of experience internally viewed? Why should the mind and its experiences be presentable to sense as the brain and its actions? Why should the visual experience of the blue sea be presentable to sense as a cerebral process? We are asked to suppose that what a mind knows itself and its experiences to be, bears no intelligible relation to what another sentient being perceives them to be. Now whether the fault lies with sense or with the externality of the knower makes little difference. One identical entity is two utterly irrelevant things, one for itself and another for an external observer, or one for sense and another for thought. Such a parallelism differs from the agnostic or monistic parallelism which it is designed to replace mainly in that it involves an entirely untenable and virtually contradictory distinction between sense and thought, and between internal and external knowledge. In the concluding chapter the indirect or physiological explanation of mind is provided for, to complete the physical account of the world with a study of the physical correlates of mind, these constituting mind as a possible object of sense. These correlates correspond not in quality, but in that they form a system with a complexity and connections answering to those of the system of mind. But we are informed that "there is no discovery about the nervous system that does not have its place and full value in the direct account of mind." And apparently this is not because the nervous system is itself a phenomenon, but because when mind is studied objectively, as in the case of comparative psychology, it is indistinguishable from forms of organic and nervous functioning. Thus the author's correlative theory would seem to be not only philosophically untenable, but scientifically unworkable.

Turning to mind as known directly by ourselves, "who are our minds and have its experiences," Professor Mitchell makes a preliminary analysis, first, of the general divisions of experience (*i. e.*, consciousness), and, secondly, of the *course* of experience. Before proceeding with the three main types of experience, *knowledge, interest* and *action*, the author makes the very important announcement that to have any kind of "object experience" is also to have a "subject experience." "The experience of an object is never without experience of our self, and the experience of our self is never without experience of an object." Now such a statement as this becomes progressively unintelligible with added reflection. By the "subject experience" is meant not the presupposition of a real subject, but the subject *in consciousness*. And how can the subject in consciousness be distinguished from the object of consciousness in general? By the admission of the author, both are content; there is consciousness *of* both; and both are entities having being apart from the consciousness of the moment. When the subject factor of consciousness becomes in a later moment the object of consciousness, it is held to be the same entity, and must possess identical content. It must be proper to say that in the previous moment this subject or self was known, at least for purposes of identification; and the subject becomes only one of the objects of consciousness which, like any other object, may pass from margin to focus. The author's generalization quoted above now becomes the intelligible, but highly questionable, proposition that in every case of consciousness the self-thing is experienced among other things. Such a change of terminology, furthermore, would essentially alter the author's treatment of knowledge, interest, and will; for in distinguishing these types of consciousness he virtually appeals to the unanalyzable subject experience.[1] It is held that we immediately experience three different attitudes of the subject towards the object: we may consciously think it as real, feel towards it, or seek it as an end. "In our experience of an object all that we make object, all that we set before us, we think; how it strikes or affects us, we feel." "In seeking any end I must have thought of it and be pleased with it, but I only seek it when I give myself to it, and to realizing it." Such distinctions are wholly valueless because they rest neither on the analysis of function nor on the analysis of content, but only on an appeal to experiences which by definition are incapable of verification.

Having distinguished knowledge, interest, and action as the main strands of experience, the author turns to a study of the "course" of experience. In a course of experience every next stage is determined by the present one, which is "an attitude that does not satisfy," and "works itself into one that does." All experience is thus experience of self-activity. Lecture V., containing a brief statement of the author's method of "direct explanation," is in many respects the best chapter in the book. We are to explain the development of a course of experience; such, for example, as the transition from sensation to knowledge. The factors involved are three: the given content, which the author calls the "occasion"; the self; and the faculty, or that special function of the self which is engaged. But we can eliminate the self, because it always functions through one of its faculties. For purposes of explanation, the faculty is not experience, but the operative mental organization; though the reader is encouraged to suspect that it is somehow connected with the experience of self-activity.

In the remainder of the book, constituting its greater part, Professor Mitchell deals in detail with "Sympathetic and Esthetic Intelligence," and with "Growth of Intelligence." Under the first of these headings, after treating of imitation, the author passes to "Absorption in Object," a special type of experience which he isolates mainly for purposes of emphasis. In this experience interest is confined to the object itself; as in "fellow feeling," through which we fixate the experience of others; in "individuation," through which we regard natural objects in all their concreteness and richness; and in the esthetic consciousness proper.

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[1] *Cf.* the author's remarkable statement on p. 100: "But in all experience beyond mere sensation the difference between subject and object is felt. It is not felt as a difference between object and object: we do not think the difference. It is felt as an attitude towards the object."

Under the heading "Growth of Intelligence," the author discusses the stages of knowledge and the development of science. Here we deal with that function of intelligence which, unlike the esthetic interest, breaks up the individuality of things, and aims to discover their systematic relations. While distinguishing "sensory," "perceptual," and "conceptual" intelligence, the author insists that "all grades of intelligence have not only a common process or method, but exercise it about a common real object." In sensory intelligence there is a series of sensations denoting the stimulus and the reactive process. Perception begins "when a sensory object is thought as a quality, and, most simply, as a member of a group." Conception begins "in the explicit thought of connections that are implicitly thought in perceiving."

In the space at our disposal it is impossible to convey an adequate idea of the wealth of penetrating analysis which this book contains. There is scarcely any philosophical topic upon which the author does not make some instructive comment. The fundamental difficulties to which attention has been called above, together with the obscurity of style and arrangement, militate most seriously against the use of this work as a text-book or systematic treatise; but it will profit any student to refer to it for light on the epistemological approach to special problems.

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Studies from the Psychological Laboratory of Wesleyan University. Vol. I., No. 1. *Monograph Supplement, Psychological Review,* Vol. VIII., No. 4, November, 1907. Baltimore: The Review Publishing Co. Pp. iv + 92. *An Experimental Study of Visual Fixation.* RAYMOND DODGE.

Professor Dodge's experiments are directed mainly towards proving that there is no fixation point in the field of vision, and that there is no central retinal point of distinctest seeing to which every point of interest in the field of vision is brought. Instead of "fixation point," Professor Dodge proposes the term "fixation field." The eye is never perfectly still. Movements of the head, due to pulse and breathing and other irregular causes, constantly disturb visual fixation. There are no compensatory eye movements for these disturbances. Retinal fatigue is suggested as another motive of fixation movements. Vision becomes blurred when the same retinal elements are continuously excited. There is then a shifting of the eye so as to employ neighboring retinal elements. The author admits that the proof for this hypothesis is not conclusive. Still another visual motive for fixation movements is inadequate binocular adjustment. The author includes here movements of convergence and divergence.

Peripheral stimulus on the retina produces reactive eye movements to establish fixation. The peripheral stimulus may be due to a lapsed fixation or to the appearance of a new point of interest. The reactive movement of the eye will be exact, however, only occasionally and by accident, because of the slow reaction time of the eye and the intervening